STORIES TOLD BY HOWELL HARRIS

F R A G M E N T S

The first building of which we have any reliable record, was built on High River around 1865. Fort Spitze was situated five miles above the crossing, or ford, of the present site of High River. It was built by that picturesque frontiersman, Newell Harris, Indian trader, buffalo hunter, super-man, and in later years, cattleman for many years; in fact, until his death, manager of the Circle Ranch, one of the largest cattle outfits in Western Canada.

The writer filed a homestead on the site of old Fort Spitze in 1883 and there I built my first home. There I brought my young wife and my three oldest sons were born there. Here ten of the happiest years of a long life were spent.

At that time the remains of the old trading post was easily traced. It consisted of log buildings with mud roofs, and was surrounded with a stockade fence, eight feet high, two hundred and fifty feet long and fifty feet wide, with three chambers. Built

in an open glade of about five acres, it was surrounded by water practically on all sides -- the High Wood River wound on the southern part, and a large spring creek on the north. Around this beautiful natural park grew many large cottonwoods; among the rest, two old trees about five feet apart, connected fifteen feet from the ground by a large limb growing from one and entering the other. This tree was known as the Medicine Tree and Indians passing through this part of the country were in the habit of visiting the tree and leaving presents of tobacco, dried meats, etc., for the spirits who they believed frequented the tree. Lodge poles, circles of rock, and other signs pointed to this as a favourite camping ground for the plain Indians. Even after I had entered into residence at this place, it still remained a favorite camping ground for Indians on their travels from the Blackfoot reservation to their relatives in the south, namely the North Piegans and South Piegans. In this way I became acquainted with many of the Indians - both Blackfeet, Bloods and Piegans.

For these reasons Harris decided to build the trading post in the favoured spot, where for two years he continued to trade in buffalo hides and horses, with the Blackfeet and their allies in that district. From him I heard many stories about Fort Spitze, and I have set down a few of these.

Before coming to Fort Spitze, Harris had charge of a trading outfit in the Northwest Territories belonging to the Conrad Brothers in Montana, pioneer Indian traders and cattlemen of that country. When he was seventeen years of age they sent him to the Northwest Territories to trade with the Indians. He told me this story of his first trip into the Northwest Territories.

He had three bull teams consisting of fifteen to twenty bulls to each wagon - each team pulled three wagons and they were constantly on their guard against hostile Indians. A sure indication of the presence of Indians in any part of the country through which they were passing, was the buffalo. When the buffalo were quiet there were no Indians in the country. When

the buffalo were restless that was a sure sign of Indians.

Shortly after crossing the imaginary line between Canada and the United States, there were signs that Indians were about. That same day, down a long divide, they saw several hundred Indians galloping towards them. The wagons were at once drawn in a circular manner and the cattle driven inside the circle. When about two hundred yards from Harris' company, the Indians in war paint pulled up, and the chief -- a young brave -- rode out, and in the sign language intimated that he wished to talk. Howell felt rather timid about leaving the shelter of the wagons. However, it was up to him as the leader of the party to hear what the Indian had to say. He got the Indian about one-half way between where they had sheltered their horses, and asked the chief when he wanted. He replied: "I want so many sacks of flour; so many sacks of sugar, so many boxes of tea; so many boxes of other miscellaneous

supplies" -- in fact he wanted the greater part of Howell's outfit. Howell told him he could not have anything. He expected his outfit to be wiped out, but he was not going to show the white feather. Replying to the Indian he said: "You can't have anything" - and the Indian spit in his face." Howell hit him just as hard as he could (and he was a powerful man), and the Indian dropped to the ground. His friends immediately charged in and started whooping. Howell thought his time had come, but he noticed the Indians looking around. They stopped their demonstrations and he looked to see what they were looking at. Over the hill came a man riding a big black horse at top speed. When he came to the first Indian he either knocked him down or hit him with his quirt and forced his way to where Howell stood. He said - "What is the matter here?" Howell told him. Looking around at the Indians the stranger said -- "Leave this man alone. If you molest him again I have four hundred breeds camped on the river, and if you

interefere with him again I will clean you out." This was Gabriel Dumont who afterwards was the leader of the Crees and Lieutenant to Louis Riel in the Northwest Rebellion.

Howell was not again interfered with.

The First Range Cattle to Winter on High River

W.I.F. Mills, an old cattleman of the Eighties, who once owned a ranch in the fork of High River, but many years ago sold out and is living in England, was an old friend of mine -- in fact we still correspond at long intervals. In a letter from him a year ago he told me this story:

When I worked for the Mauncel ranch, I often rode over on Sunday to talk with Dave Akers who kept a trading post west of the crossing of High River in the early Seventies. He traded there in company with a man by the name of "Liver Eating Johnson". The Indians became troublesome and they also incurred the enmity

of the Spitze Police." (I had not heard the name for fifty years -- who were the Spitze Police? Spitzee is the Blackfoot word for Highwood River and the Spitze Police were a band of adventurers who were sometimes called wolfers who made a living by killing wolves for their hides and in any other way they could.)

Well the upshot of the trouble was that Ackers and his partner had to make a getaway, abandon their fort and leave their work oxen. They put in the rest of the winter at Whoop on the Belly River, another whiskey trading camp. In the spring they returned to High River and were surprised to find their cattle fat and sleek. This was probably due to the fact that good buffalo meat was better eating than old work bulls. Akers maintained that this was the first bunch of cattle ever wintered on the High River Range.

HOWELL HAS AN ENEMY

A young Indian brave, who had only arrived a few days before from some distant tribe, wished to avenge the death of his brother who had been killed by a white man. He decided that as Howell was a big man, his brother's death would be avenged if he killed this white trader. This was the Indian custom -- not necessarily the man who did the killing, but any white man's death would even up the score.

He planned the manner of Howell's passing in the following way. Before daylight he would climb to the roof of the low log house immediately over the only door leading from Harris' room, and when Howell stepped out in the morning, he would shoot him in the back. It looked like a cinch, - but the best laid plans of mice and men etc., etc., A certain woman, to whom the Indian had confided his plan, came to Howell in the night and gave him warning, and so, in stead of going out the door as was his usual habit, he opened a small window in the rear, and slipping

quietly around the corner, the Indian was on his way to the Happy Hunting Ground.

I asked Harris if the Indians did not resent this. He said they did, but he squared it with a half gallon of whiskey.

I after cut down many of those old cottonwoods for summer stove wood and many bullets have I taken from those old patriarchs. Howell informed me that this place was the scene of many battles between hostile tribes. Those bullets would seem to prove this, as Indians did not waste cartridges in target practice in those early times.

THE STORY OF NIGGER DAN

Nigger Dan, an employee of Harris', aroused the deadly enmity of a young Blackfoot brave called Lightning Streak. As usual, only a woman can call up these primeval instincts in the male, and a challenge to mortal combat was accepted by Nigger Dan.

The agreement was "Winchesters at 60 yards." contestants standing back to back; Harris to count - one,two, three. At the word three they turn - begin shooting and walk towards each other till one or the other goes or their guns are emptied.

It was not likely Dan would have to walk far as he was known as a dead shot. Dan killed his man at the first shot - losing, however, the lobe of one ear by the Indian's bullet. Another young brave volunteered to take his place, and after the preliminaries were all settled, the fatal words again rang out -- one, two, three. Again Dan whirls and kills his man, hitting him directly between the eyes, and having the crown of his Stetson punctured by the Indian's bullet.

Peace again settles - the women will mourn and the tom toms will beat because of the passing of these two young braves and their heroism will furnish the subject of tales to be told around many a campfire in years to come by those who witnessed it and by their descendants.

THE ROMANCE OF MRS. KOOTENAI BROWN, BORN A FULL/BLOODED CREE

Nearing the century mark, death this morning called Mrs. Kootenai Brown, one of the most picturesque Indians in Western Canada. She was the widow of the founder and first superintendent of Waterton National Park in southern Alberta, who was the first white settler in Waterton Lakes district. Following a colorful career, he died in 1916, leaving his widow to whom he was legally married by Father Lacombe.

A buxom Indian girl, a member of the Cree tribe, Mrs. Brown's early home was in a tepee in the southern part of Saskatchewan. Here at the age of 17, with straight black hair flying unrestrained in the Chinook wind, she would dash madly across the prairie on a cayuse. Life was an adventure and she loved it. She did not have to think of her figure. The fuller it was the more popular she would be. Redskins preferred stout squaws. They brought twice as much as skinny girls. So her girlhood was spent in the easy carefree manner of the Indians when the plains were their property. Gay colors delighted her heart and her joy in a bit of bright ribbon was evident when she dressed for special occasions.

Early one spring --so long ago that Mrs. Brown had forgotten the year-- she left her prairie home to visit relatives living at Babb, Mont. Shortly after her arrival there her relations talked of going over the mountains to trade with a pale face known as Kootenai Brown, who was in charge of the famous

"Dardanelles" trading post. She thrilled to the promise of adventure. She, too, would go.

Meets Kootenai Brown

After days of pilgrimage over precipitous Rocky Mountain pass, the party arrived at the trading post. The sparkling brown eyes of the Indian girl immediately attracted John George Brown, romanticist and soldier of fortune. What could he trade for her? An ugly squaw would demand one pony, but this woman would not be so cheap. Finally he agreed to trade five cayuses. In this manner "Chee-Nee-Pay-Tha-Que-Na-Sees" became the property of Kootenai Brown, the man who was born in Ireland, served in the army in Indian and after travelling about South America, getting in many scrapes, finally landed on the Pacific coast of Canada. In 1859 he wended his way through the Kootenai pass to what is now one of the most famous parks in the Dominion of Canada, but at that time was an unexplored region. Kootenai came by his nickname either because of his adventure through that region or because he could speak the language of the Kootenai Indians.

A delightful part of Kootenai's trade to get himself the Indian belle of his desires showed his shrewdness. After giving the Indian sufficient "fire water," it is said he staged a pony race and won back the five ponies.

The Indian girl lived happily in her mountain home overlooking the deep blue lakes in the Waterton region. Their log house was at the mouth of Pass Creek, the property on which

Kootenai had his homestead. Although the building is no longer there, the place is marked by a little white picket fence on the side of the mountain where Kootenai is laid to rest. To this point Mrs. Brown made a yearly pilgrimage, returning wearily at nightfall to her habitation in the foothills at Twin Butte where she lived with her old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Reviere, breeds, who are descendants of the French aristocracy.

Full of Romance

Mrs. Brown's life with Kootenai was full of romance and adventure. She was the envy of all other Indian maidens because Kootenai kept her dressed in brilliant silks. He showered her with gifts of beads and rings, and treated her always with great respect. His pet name for her was "Nitchimouse", meaning "My Good Woman." But no other might have that privilege. Mr. Brown saw to it that others addressed her as "Mrs. Brown." Two children were born but neither survived owing to improper nourishment. Mrs. Brown was known throughout the district for her hospitality but she never could master the art of bread-making so hot biscuits took its place in their homey fare. Her home was spotlessly clean, and although she never attempted to speak English lest someone make fun of her, she could understand most things said to her.

Just one black cloud darkened the horizon of her happy life with her beloved paleface husband; that was when he brought home a white girl. Mrs. Brown would not stand the indignity. She waited till Kootenai and the girl went into the mountains to hunt, then piled all the household effects into the old wagon, hitched up the ponies and treked the weary miles back to her relations at Babb. Soon Kootenai followed. He wanted her to return. She did so after much persuasion and the promise that such a thing would not happen again. It never did.

Happy Hunting Grounds

When death robbed Mrs. Brown of her life partner the government provided that she receive proper care. Her days were passed in idleness, the brightest spots being visits from old friends. An old clay pipe was her constant companion. The sparkling brown eyes grew dimmed with age but dreams were behind them. She looked forward to this day when she goes to the happy hunting ground to join Kootenai. Snow white hair framed her dusky weather-beaten face. There were lines there. Deep lines of love, happiness, sorrow, all forming the history of a life well spent. Wrinkled hands now grasped a sturdy cane to help her moccasin-covered feet over the remainder of life's pathways.

As she heard the throb of airplanes crossing the Rockies she recalled the words of Kootenai who told her, "One day you will see men fly like birds." His promise came true. She awaited his other promise, that she would join him in the future world. "Nitchimouse" delighted to think that she may be buried with the full Indian rites. Eagerly she anticipated that adventure which she believed would end in reunion with Kootenai.

In 1888 my prospecting partner, Lafayette French and I, were making a trip to the head waters of Pass Creek, stopped at Kootenai Browns for the night. Mrs. Kootenai Brown mentioned in the foregoing article, was there -- just the two of them. The house was spotlessly clean -- of course we had our own camp outfit, but we had supper with them and after supper he and Mr. French talked (they were old acquaintenances) (I was just a young tenderfoot). French wanted to see Kootenai Brown's horses. He had a little bunch of saddle horses graxing down by the lake a short distance, so we went down a pathway. As we walked along two prairie chickens jumped into the trail and were running along ahead of us. Kootenai pulled his six shooter and shot these birds who e they were running -- first one and then the other -- shooting their heads off. He was a noted pistol shot and that proved it to me. He never was seen without that gun -- Colt's 45. I mention this just as a characteristic of the man.

The other day I drifted in to one of these self-serve spots in the city for a bite of lunch. Ahead of me in the line was a long lean six-footer, his broad Stetson pushed back on his head, his tray precariously balanced, and his eyes hovering broodingly over roast lamb and chicken dumplings. He just couldn't make up his mind.

Why, it was Misty Mullins, old time cowpuncher from Happy Valley-- Misty Mullins that I hadn't seen for years and years. "Hi, there, Misty," I said, giving his elbow a jiggle. "Get back on your own range. It's beef you want you old cow hand. How come you're fooling around with sheep and poultry."

Misty turned slowly, his brown, wind-blown face breaking into a remembering grin. "Well, sure enough," he exclaimed. "Here you are, and here I am, long time no see, long way from home. And you're right about this grub-pile. It is beef I want. You herded me back just in time."

"But Misty," I ask, "when you come to the city, why don't you go to one of these swank joints where waiters mill around you, and they just give you one thing at a time, and the table crawls with forks and spoons and such? Why don't you give yourself a touch of luxury?"

"No Ma'am," replies Misty firmly. "You want to know why I come to one of these outfits where it's all laid out neat in front of you? It's because I'm trying to recapture the past. See this

layout with all you're going to get in full view!" and he sweeps a long arm down the counter to the peril of everything within range. "This is the nearest I can ever come to those old revolving tables we used to have out on the ranch. That old ranch table was the daddy of all these self-serving ideas. He's sired some pretty queer freaks, but they're his all right."

But by that time a crowd was piling up behind us; Misty had made his choice of victuals, and began pushing along to an empty spot, shouting back over his shoulder "Now don't tell me you don't remember those tables."

Remember them! No one, once having drawn in his chair to their groaning abundance would ever forget them. They were the dominant piece of furniture of every ranch house in the early days. Home hewn they were, a product of the days when home carpentering was all there was. They were circular -- 6,7,8 feet across, their size varying according to the expansive ideas of the ranch owner.

They were double deckers. The lower tier was stationary with massive central base, and on it were placed the tools of the meal; plates, cups, saucers and cutlery. But the real soul and substance of that old table was spread out on the upper deck, which was raised a few inches above the lower; was a couple of feet smaller in diameter, and swung deliriously on a pivot at the touch of a finger. As a matter of fact, it was usually a transformed hay rake wheel. And on it was spread the sum total of the meal, eyefilling

and bountiful, there for the taking.

They had made their way up to the Canadian west, those tables -- up from south of the border and the Pacific states. They say that the first one in this country appeared at the Oxley ranch on Willow Creek, to simplify life for Fred Anderson the cook. Down in the south they were known as "whirling tables". In some parts they were called "Lazy Susans". Lazy Susans, indeed! What a dainty name for those great, cumbersome, masculine pieces of construction. They were emphatically anything but feminine. "Whirling" table gives you a picture. And could they whirl, with twelve or fifteen ravenous appetites round them, but to call them Lazy Susans is far from fitting.

There was something symbolic in that great revolving table. It was a typical ranch gesture-- "Here's all there is folks, the best we can provide. Draw in and help yourself. You're welcome."

Misty and I lapse into sentimental recollections over that grand old relic of the past, now scarcely to be found in the ranch country, except possibly in the obscurity of some bunkhouse.

"What was it you most liked about those tables?" I ask him.

"Well for one thing," he answers "if a fellow was shy and backward, he could stoke up without having to ask for things. If he couldn't find his voice to call for more potatoes or another piece of meat, he didn't have to go without. He just twirled the table and helped himself. If he craved two, three, four pieces of pie, he didn't have to proclaim his shame for all to hear. He just

manoeuvred round till some way the pie was in front of him again."

"Why, a pilgrim who couldn't even talk the language, could ride the grubline round the ranches and live high. So long as he could understand "Come and get it', he could step into a ranch house, pull in his chair, swing the upper tier back and forth to suit his fancy, and move on without uttering a word."

Misty has talked long enough, so I break in with my recollections. "I'll never forget my first introduction to one of those tables. It was out at Senator Riley's ranch a good many years ago. You were there too, Misty. We had bumped over the Porcupine hills by buckboard, and dropped down on the ranch, and were we hungry? There before us when we finally made port, was that heavenly scene. The great roast, flanked with substantial ranch vegetables and green stuff. The pies-- the saskatoon pies!

"But I pretty nearly missed out because I wasn't on to the system. Nobody passed me anything. Nobody said 'Do have some of this or that. The table kept swinging back and forth in front of me under the urge of other people's desires; the good things kept passing me by. Then I discovered that modesty had no place at that man's table. I gave a determined swing, and landed some meat on the fly. Growing bolder with success, I gave another meaningful swing, a defiant glance all round, and speared myself the last piece of pie."

Or it might be another helping of trout, fresh from the creek; or more bacon and eggs, or another cup of coffee. Anyway, there was always something on that table to stir joy, then speculation, and finally apprehension. Then at the zero hour when there

definitely was not enough to go round, in popped old Lem Chong with a magic reserve supply.

"You know it seems to me," breaks in Misty, easing back in his chair and rolling himself another cigarette" that we had better conversation in those days, real good solid conversation. I don't say it was the table, but it sort of helped. Everyone on the ranch-- the boss, the hands and the company, all gathered round and pooled their highest thoughts. There was always room for one more chair, and always time for one more yarn."

Misty is right. Perhaps the most enduring memory of the old revolving table is the conversation which rolled along without interruption, like a smooth flowing river. And such talk! None of this anaemic stuff of stocks and bonds, and how the country is going to rack and ruin. But real talk with substance and dash, blending fact and fiction magnificently and with abandon. No tale too tall to command attention, and instant grave attention,and leisurely discussion. It was round such tables that distinctive western humor really bloomed, as tonic as the mountain air, as boundless as the wide horizons, as kindly as the good earth.

Now, back on Riley's ranch, that summer of long ago, we were all worked up over a bear cub that Curly, one of the ranch hands, was taming. Curly pictured a great future for himself, with the bear as the nucleus for a new livestock industry. He envisioned the day when his BlueLabel bear would command the markets of the world, and put the beef industry on the skids. That opens up a

serious field of speculation. Can he get his bear fattened for the spring market when it sleeps all winter? How to go about breeding up his herd. Not a day but some one has some new suggestion for the bear industry.

Or a neighbor drops in with the latest scandal from a nearby ranch. The domestic entanglements of Billie Streeter's Blue Billy Goat and his preference for blonds. That is the current gossip. A cowboy rides along with the news that Jack Drumheller's Irish sheepherder on the top of Windy Hill has seen another apparition. Or it may be the latest appearance of the Mad Trapper of the Rockies who can outrun the fleetest horse. Or the Twilight Monster of Haunted Lake that is never seen except by Indians.

That is real he-man talk, the kind that rambles along for pure enjoyment, unhurried and easy. The kind that is only possible when the owner, the hands, the neighbors and the company all gather together round one board, with all the ingredients there to stir the appetite, mellow the spirit and spur the wit.

"This country sure lost something when the women decided those old tables weren't stylish", moans Misty. "The way things are now would almost drive a man to farming". And together we sit, plunged in gloomy reflections.

"But isn't there anything comfortable and leisurely left over from the past?", I ask Misty Hopefully. "The old corral fence used to be a pretty fair roundup. How about it now?"

"Well, yes", concedes Misty. "We still have the old corral, and I'd say one of the best places for an oldtimer to do

his recollecting, is on the corral fence on a pleasant summer day. That top deck is one of the best sitting places in the known world. Take on a sunny afternoon, with the breezes rippling the meadow grass; the clouds playing tag round the hilltops; and the creek chuckling along like normal. Over to the west the Rockies loom up calm and everlasting and some way you just slough off all the naggling little meanness of the world and let yourself go. It's a grand place to ease in on a bunch of old timers. Once they get outfitted with a wad of chewing, a pipe or the makings, then you are alongside some of the largest and noblest recollecting ever produced. Some of the best inventions and liveliest arguments in the world have had their birth on the old corral fence."

Again Misty is right. The sun shines down in the old corral, and the talk just drifts along. It goes from cattle rustling in Alberta to cattle rustling in Wyoming. It swings from gold mining in the Caribou to mining in the Yukon, with a side trip to Siberia on a whaler. And all this talk of gold mining inevitably leads to the most sacred tradition of the Alberta Foothills, the long lost Lemon mine. "Never heard of the Lemon mine!", they exclaim. "Never heard of how it was found and lost, and never found again? Never heard of all the folks who met death or disaster trying to follow the trail, nor the black curse the Stoney chiefs laid on the Valley?"

And on they ramble in a gentle mist of speculation, about the best valley to follow up to come once more upon that fabulous long lost mine of pure gold. It is a dream of which foothills folk never grow weary.

Or you want yarns of cowboys and roundups; of stampedes and bad horses? You want yarns of the Seven Dry Years when settlers went creaking northward by covered wagon, night and day; when water birds abandoned the country; when the earth cracked open and Chinamen began crawling up through the cracks? You want to hear of the year of the big wind, when it blew forty days and forty nights; you want to hear of blizzards and vanishing herds? Well you can still get those old yarns from the old timers anchored to the top deck of the corral fence on a sunny summer day.

Misty says the foothills lost something precious when revolving tables were banished to the bunkhouse. He speaks truly; that old table combined simplicity and lavishness. It brought together all on the ranch in that good fellowship and "one-for-all" spirit by which the old ranches functioned. As Misty says, there was always room for one more chair, always time for one more yarn at such a table. But so long as the old corral fence remains, there's still treasure in them thar hills.

Beginning of the Cattle Era —

including fragment re NWMP Cattle & Stone & Fitzmaurice

Introduction:

In the early eighties, the western States, where the cattle industry had flourished for many years and where , at that time, the ranges were overstocked and eaten out: cattle men after looking for newere and better ranges , wandered across the Canadian border, after listening to the glowing reports of whiskey Traders, who had penetrated the North west, decided , decided to look over it's possibilities as a range countery. What thye saw looked like an eldorado.

The country lying east of the Rockies, a few years previous the grazing grounds of unnumbered herds of buffalo, now was covered with rich buffalo grass, watered with numerous mountain streams and springs of pure water, furnished ideal summer grazing , while adjacent and lying to the we st was the sheltered and well grassed foothill country, brouzdey furnishing shelter and grazing , for the winter months. This was the country as I first saw it.

It is little wonder that they exclaimed " This is a cow heaven ". And so csttle from the beighboring States came pouring into what is now Alberta. Small herds, large herds, numbering up to ~~11,111~~ 10,000. It was a virgin country, no settlement, no wire fences, no taxes and no restrictions. Today they are spoken of , as the good old days. And so in a few years Alberta became a cattle country. But , in order to feel some securtty in this new country, they secured large areas as grazing leases, for 21 year terms, at a small annual rental, from the Canadian G overnment, which at that time, had no idea that these

lands would be in demand for settlement and later produce wheat of t the highest quality.

Few of these leasees knew the boundaries of their lands and cattle wandered at will. For many years we had the country of the open range. There was a general Round up in the early summer when cattle belongingto the northern part were thrown b ck and vice versa. Of course most of the cattle were found in the southern ranges , drifted there by winter storms. In the fall, another Roundup was held to gather the beef and t e herds were again turned loose. for the winter

This system worked well until the winter of '86 & '87, the hardest winter in my 54-59 years experience . 75% of many of the herds perished . Since that time , calves are weaned and all available hay secured. The large leasess were cancelled , owing to the non-payment of rentals, but the cattle still use used the same range. Truly these were the days of the open range.

A trade in beef cattle was opened up with the Old Country and all top steers were exported. They were sold by the head, in those days, ranging from $45 to $55 per-head. 1200 lb So much for the founding of the r industry.

In the '90's settlers from all parts of Eastern Canada, the U.. the U.S. and a few from Europe, came poring into the country, brou brought thither by free land. The days of the open range were over. Cattle were drivenfrom their summer grazing grounds on the prairies back behind wire fences into the rough lands of the adjacent foot-hills and to the poorer parts lands laying fur her east.. Today that is where the cattle are to be found on the range.

The first large herds of cattle to come were the Cochrane Ranch herd to the Bow River , and the North West Cattle CO. to High River. in the fall of '82. French and Smith, two former Indian traders established a trading post, immediately west of the present town of High River. This location was on the old Fort Benton trail. They also ran a small herd of horses and cattle.. Their ranch was the headquarters , for many years of the HighRiver district. Fort Benton stages stopped there and all mail came to the country came to the country by this route. They also cultivated about 40 acres of land and became pioneers in farming as well as stock raising. The story of their lived wouls discount many works of fiction.

Buck Smith, who settled on land adjoining French and Smith is as good an example of the type of individual of the early settler: born on a cattle ranch in California, he had lived on the frontier alll his life and was known to the Indians as " the man who never misses". and Among his white contemporaries;; as the best shot west of the Missouri : this at a time when a man lived on and by his rifle.

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The years '85 to '90 saw the largest influx of ea range herds. From that time to the beginning of the rp present century these rangemen wrote the most glamorous page of in the history of the North West cattle industry. Today the ranges are fenced, herds curtailed and few of the old pioneers remain to carry on the tradition of the early days.

Another of the most colorful and picturesque cattlementhen was the late Howell Harris: coming from Montana as a youth of I7 in charge of a large trading outfit, which he established five miles west of High River , on the Highwood River. In later years when the North West Mounted Police took over the government of the country from the hands of the Indian traders., his company sent in large herds of cattle from Montana, which he remained in charge of until his death. His life and adventures would make a most interesting addition to the early history of theis country.

Previous to,the Mounted Police, we had in this country, what was called the Spitzee Police. The word Spitzee being Blackfoot for Highwood. Outside of a few old timers still living, no one has ever heard the term. It was an organization composed of adventures, apart from the regular Whiskey Traders, men who made a living, by dealing with the Indians, wolfing and other precarious activities. Dave Akers of Stand -OFF tells this story: He and his partner built a trading post close to the site of High River. Trouble arose with the Spitzee Police and Akers and his partner deemed it wise to leave over night, abandonning their outfit, the post and several spans of oxen. They took refuge at Fort Whoop -Up on the Belly River for the winter , but when they returned in the spring the oxen had winterd well. Akers always claimed that this was the first herd of cattle ever wintered in this country.

One word as to the men wh o handled these huge herds of cattle. The most of them came with these herds from the south and had learned the business on the American rnages. Unlike the cowboys of today, who must do all kinds of ranch work, they steadfastly refude to do any work that could not be done on horseback. Fred Stimpson, one of the historical characters and managing director of tthe North West Cattle CO. owned by the Allens of Montreal, one winter morning ordered one of his cowboys to go down to the timber and cut rails . Moody innocently asked the boss which horse he would ride. On being told that he did not need a horse to cut rails, " Well if I can't cut 'em A'horseback I won't cut 'em atall."

Conditions in the industry have changed since those days. Calves are weaned, poor cattle are sheltered and large quantities of feed are put up for prolonged and severe storms. Quality has replaced weight and quantity. While the English market was our first market, it has developed that th e American market is more profitableand now we are sending our herds back to a market where thhey are in demand and where the original came from.

The North West Cattle Company - the Allens of Montreal - brought 3,000 head of cattle from Montana the fall of 1882. This was the first large herd in the High River district. They located at the present site of their (Bar U) ranch, now owned and operated by P. Burns. The Manager was Fred Stimson of Montreal an historical character of the old range days. Under him as Foreman worked at different times, Ab. Cotterel, Jo Johnson, Geo. Lane, Hunter Powell, Seven U Brown, Ed. Johnson, living retired at Cochrane, the original of Churchills, "The Virginian", Herb Miller.

These men, with the exception of Jo Johnson and Alb Cotterel, are still living and have all taken an important place in the life of the country.

Herb Miller who was in the employ of the (Bar U) when I came to the country fifty-nine years ago, only severed his connection with that ranch a few months ago. Bert

1942
1883
59

FIRST RANCHERS

The first large herd of cattle came to High River in the fall of 1882, but around 1876, Lafayette French and O.H. Smith established themselves immediately west of what is now the Town of High River. This location was on the old Fort Benton and Edmonton Trail and as well as keeping a stopping place, as they were known in those days, they maintained a small herd of cattle and horses. Their ranch was the headquarters of the High River district, the Fort Benton stages stopped there and all mail came to the country by this route. They were the first settlers in the High River district. They broke and cultivated about forty acres of land. Finer crops than they raised in '83 I have never seen since that time so that they were peioneers in farming as well as stock raising. The story of the lives of either one of them would discount similar works of fiction.

French and Smith, when settlement began to dribble in,

located a ranch on the North Fork of High River which they shortly after sold to Ings Bros. Since that time this ranch has been successfully operated, was known as the O.H. Ranch, and is now the property of Senator Burns.

Many those men - pioneers, Indian traders and picturesque characters - with a thorough knowledge of the North West Territories, chose High River to settle down in after their business as Indian traders was interfered with by the Indian Treaties of '76.

Buck Smith had, in the '70's, also located immediately west of French and Smith with a small herd of cattle. Buck Smith used a brand known as the "rian tootler". It was a combination of Spanish characters and I never knew of a white man who could read it. and so it was known as the rian tootler Jasper Smith, or as he was known to his friends, "Buck", and to the Indians as "the man who never misses", was one of the most colourful of the old pioneers.

Born and brought up on a cattle ranch in California, he was an expert rider and roper and was known to his contemporaries as the best shot west of the Missouri River. This at a time when a man lived by and on his rifle. He died many years ago

Another of the early cattlemen was John Quirk, an Irishman who had made a strike in the rich placer gulches of Montana. With his wife, a real pioneer and a charming lady, they settled on what is now the Town of High River but shortly after moved to the foothill country of Sheep Creek where for many years they raised thousands of fine beef cattle. They have gone over the last divide many years ago but no one has left a finer memory.

The Quirk brand was a Q. Whether or not the iron it is still used, I do not know but the ranch they located is still a going concern.

Possibly the best known of the old time stockmen was the firm of Emerson & Lynch - Emerson, an old Hudson Bay man; Lynch,

a product of Montana. They established a ranch very early on High River about six miles above the Crossing, as it was then known, or what is now the Town of High River. They were drovers, bringing herds of cattle and horses from Montana to Alberta. This Ranch is now known as the Round T After some years they dissolved partnership; Emerson locating on the Middle Fork of High River and Lynch on Flat Creek, a tributary of the North Fork.

Emerson was in the cattle business in a large way for many years. He branded with anchor P. and this old iron is still run by Rod Macleay. George Emerson was a substantial man in every way and ~~the~~ this was a sheet anchor to many a wayward cowboy. He died in High River some years ago, loved and respected by all who knew him. Lynch died suddenly many years ago, but the ranch he located on Flat Creek is now owned and operated by the Round T Cattle Company of High River.

James Minesinger, a Montana pioneer, early took up a

location a few miles west of High River, subsequently moving to the foothill country to what is now the ranch of the author, Frazer Hunt. With him was associated his son-in-law, Al Miles.

Duncan Cameron on the Middle Fork, now included in the Thorp & Cartwright holdings.

E.M. Levings on the South Fork, afterwards amalgamated with the Bar U.

~~H Brown established the ranch he located in the foothills of~~

~~Charles Knox located in what is now the Gardiner Ranch of Pekisko.~~ Howell Harris

These men have all passed away many years ago but their memory is still green in the minds and hearts of those privileged to know them.

One of the most colorful and picturesque cattle men of the old days was the late Howell Harris. Coming from Montana to the Northwest Territories, as they then were, a youth of seventeen, he was in charge of a large Indian trading outfit. He established a trading post on High River five miles west of the crossing and traded for two winters with the Black-feet Bloods and Peegan tribes.

After the North West Mounted Police took the government of the territory out of the hands of the Indian trader, his company, an American one, brought in large herds of cattle from Montana and Howell was in charge of them until his death. The story of his life and adventures would make a most interesting addition to the early history of this country.

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1942
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The years '85 to '90 saw the largest influx of range herds to Southern Alberta. From that time to the beginning of the present century, the range men wrote the most glamorous page in the history of the North West range industry. Today the ranges are fenced, herds have been curtailed and few of the old pioneers of the industry remain to carry on the tradition of the early days. The largest of these herds was the Powder River Cattle Company, Wyoming, of between nine and ten thousand head. They located on Mosquito Creek and the Old Trollinger Place, now owned by F.W. Ings, was their headquarters. After some years the herd was driven to Saskatchewan. They branded with the seventy-six iron and were a fine herd of exceptional quality.

The Company furnished its riders with Winchester rifles; evidently the '85 Rebellion had given the impression that this was a country of bad Indians.

These cattle withstood the '86 winter better than any other being all dry cattle or a dry herd as any calves born on the trail were killed on the bed ground each morning.

Among the many herds started during these years were The Little Bow Cattle Company on Mosquito Creek, William Cochrane, Manager, now owned and operated by Jack Drumheller and known as the JC

The Bar S, owned by Walter Skine , Samson & Hartford, Little Bow ; Hall & Tronnel 25 brand ; A.E. Cross, Mosquito Creek ; The D Bar .

Then there was the Oxley Ranch, an English company located on Willow Creek with John R. Craig, author of "Ranching with Lords and Commoners" as Manager. Brand O X . The Cochrane outfit, owned by Senator Cochrane of Montreal, arrived from Montana in the fall of '82 and was under the management of Col. Walker. The following spring they moved to the Macleod country.